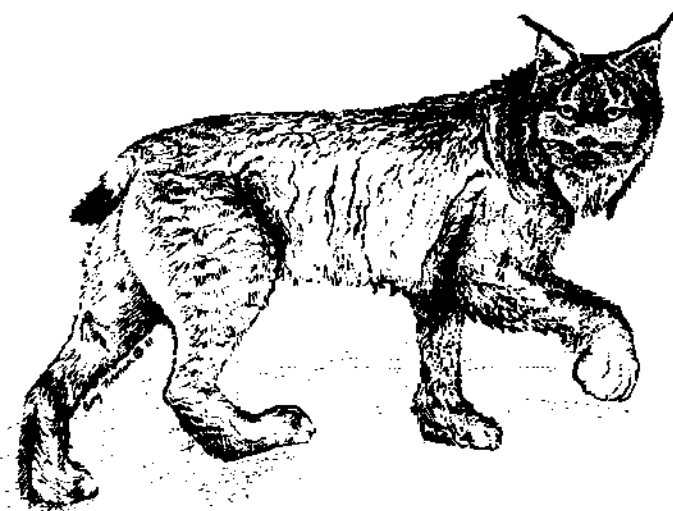


# **\*\*ATTENTION\*\***

*This document is provided for historical purposes only.*

*Documents contained in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Document & Publication Archive may contain dated and/or incorrect information. The WDFW Document & Publication Archive is provided as a service to those interested in the history of fish and wildlife management in Washington State.*



# CANADA LYNX

The lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) is one of Washington's most secretive predators. Individuals range over very large hunting territories, sometimes ranging as far as fifty miles.

## Description

The lynx's appearance is similar to that of the bobcat, its smaller, and more widespread cousin. It differs from the bobcat, however, by its larger size, generally lighter color, massive padded paws and bushy ear tufts. Lynx vary in color from light buff to gray; their fur is soft and deep. Their stubby tail is tipped completely with black. The face is framed by distinguished ruffs at the jowls. The reclusive forest cats are 32-36 inches long and weigh between 15 and 25 lbs. Males and females are about the same size.

## Habitat

The range of the lynx extends from Alaska to the Atlantic Ocean, mostly in the northern forests. In the Rockies, the lynx extends south into Utah. Washington is actually at the

southern limit of the lynx's range in the intermountain West. Populations of lynx in Washington occur in the Cascades and eastward into the Okanogan Highlands and Selkirk Mountains. No sightings are recorded for western Washington. Specific habitat for the lynx is the mid-to upper-elevation forest and associated marshes.

## Life History

The name "lynx" comes from Greek and means "he who sees in dim light." In the darkness of the deep forest night, the lynx stalks its prey, which consists mainly of snowshoe hares, supplemented by grouse, squirrels and other animals, including the young of large mammals like deer and elk. Its over-sized paws serve as "snowshoes" during winter, when deep snow fills the cat's forest haunts. A lynx den consists of a rock cleft, a hollow log or a dense windfall. Kittens, usually numbering two, are born with closed eyes and spend their first months close to the den. Animals

can reproduce at the age of one year. Lynx held in captivity have reached 12 years of age. Elsewhere in its range, lynx populations are known to fluctuate dramatically in cycles corresponding to the abundance of snowshoe hares. In Washington, however, dramatic fluctuations in hare populations do not occur. The Washington population of lynx occurs above 4,500 feet in elevation.

## Management

In Washington, lynx are taken by rifle or trap. Three permits—each good for one lynx—are awarded in Okanogan County, west of the Okanogan River. Successful applicants for a lynx permit who hold a trapping license are permitted only to trap lynx; applicants who are drawn who hold a hunting license are required to hunt lynx. For specific regulations, consult the Washington Department of Wildlife brochure, *Mountain Goat, Sheep, Moose, Cougar, and Lynx Hunting Seasons*.